

## PSYCHOLOGICAL ISSUES OF STUDENTS' SOCIAL INITIATIVE IN HIGHER EDUCATION ESTABLISHMENTS: SYSTEMIC APPROACH

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**Abstract.** The article gives a theoretical and empirical study of psychological issues of students' social initiative in higher education establishments through the systemic approach in psychological science. The development of modern Ukrainian higher education is being analyzed and on this basis the study of the students' psyche is highly important. The study of scientific views on the psychological phenomenon of "social initiative" in domestic and foreign works has shown ambiguity in the views of scientists on the nature and content of the students' social initiative. Generalization of scientific ideas has shown that social initiative is a systemic property of human, which covers the cognitive, personal, volitional, motivational and behavioral characteristics of the individual. On the basis of theoretical study and research, the authors of the article highlight the components, levels and indicators of students' social initiative in higher education establishments. The results of the empirical study of the system of structural components of social initiative of students' are demonstrated. A detailed description of the presence, partial presence or absence of students' social initiative students is suggested by the authors. Important attention is paid to the experimental study of the system of structural components of the students' social initiative. The system of components of social initiative of applicants for higher education is analyzed. The article notes that in most of the students under experiment the average level of social initiative indicates the importance of experimental study and development of this phenomenon. The article presents a model of psychological formation of the system of student social initiative, which is developed on the basis of empirical research. This article draws attention to the specifics of the manifestation of student social initiative, the importance of the development of this phenomenon and facilitates the implementation of student-centered approach in Ukrainian higher education.

*Keywords:* social initiative, student, systemic approach in psychology, system of social initiative structural components, cognitive-evaluative component, motivational-volitional component, behavioral-communicative component

The student-centered approach has become important in the current development the higher education in Ukraine taking into account all the individual psychological characteristics of students during the educational process in higher educational institutions. To implement this approach, it is important to develop psychological science and empirical study of the student psyche. After all, maintaining mental health is one of the important conditions for the implementation of educational and extracurricular processes. Student years are the period of self-determination, self-realization, personal maturity, social activity,

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and mastery of professional skills and the formation of worldview. The educational environment of the student has a significant impact on the formation of his personality. The main task of the students is to acquire knowledge, skills and abilities that will ensure their professional activities in the future. According to Professor V. P. Andrushchenko “Education — teaching and upbringing — is the most noble and responsible sphere of human activity precisely because it forms a human as a person, forms his worldview and culture, raises the foundations for future profession, career, life success” [1].

Modernization of higher education is aimed at the importance of professional competence of future professionals, so educational standards offer a significant increase of the out of class activity of the students. The out of class activity requires the imitativeness of students. The task of higher educational institutions is to develop the applicants social skills, such as socially active behavior, communicative skills, leadership skills, focusing on counteraction in conflict situations, leading to the importance of social initiative of the future professionals.

Student years are characterized not only by educational activities, but also by cultural, educational, organizational ones, etc. Extracurricular, social work creates optimal conditions for the formation of social initiative, which is a prerequisite for an active life position of the individual. The participation of the students in the social life, in public organizations, youth movements, student self-government institutions, indicates that the process of socio-psychological development of students becomes increasingly important in modern higher education establishments. After all, this process promotes the development of individual and personal qualities: social thinking, responsibility for the task, social initiative, independence, and formation of organizational skills, leadership skills, communication skills, active social position etc. Thus, the development of social initiative of the future specialist is one of the urgent problems of higher education in Ukraine, as social initiative is an integral quality of a modern competitive personality.

On the territory of Ukraine, great attention was paid to the study of student personality by modern psychologists-scientists: S. O. Stavytska explored the spiritual self-consciousness of young people; A. F. Fedorenko revealed the peculiarities of psychological support of participants in the educational process; D. D. Otych studied the coping behavior of psychology students; S. L. Kravchuk revealed the peculiarities of vitality and psychological resilience of future professionals etc. It should be noted that there is a lack of special studies of the manifestation of student social initiative, which includes all the structural units of this phenomenon. Thus, the importance of studying the psychological characteristics of higher education students has become important in Ukrainian science, but the lack of study of social initiative, necessitated the study of this psychological phenomenon.

The **aim** of the article is a theoretical and empirical study of the psychological features of the manifestation of social initiative of students from the point of a systemic approach in psychology. The **objectives** of the article are to study the problem of students' social initiative; determining the components, levels and indicators of the system of students social initiative theoretically; empirical study of the system of students social initiative; development of the model of psychological formation of the system of students social initiative.

The theoretical basis of the experimental study of the system of student's social initiative structural components is the researches of domestic and foreign psychologists. Empirical study of student's social initiative is based on a systemic approach in psychological science, which provides the study of the structure of this phenomenon in the unity of all its components. Basic statements of the systemic approach concept by B. F. Lomov, theories of functional systems by P. K. Alekhine and the studies of S. D. Maksymenko became the basis for the study of social initiative of students. In the context of this approach, social initiative is considered within the basic criteria of systemicity: integrity, structure, multidimensionality, hierarchy and dynamism [14].

Scientific visions from the point of view of nature and structure of social initiative are ambiguous. All scientific theories have in common the social initiative as the kind of initiative and a prerequisite for social activity of the individual. Social activity is defined by scientists as the one that is focused on solving social problems; opportunity to be useful to society; the way of life of the social subject the result of which is the achievement of the goal, etc. [19, 22].

Representatives of the psychoanalytic approach consider social initiative through a system of individual psychological characteristics of the individual at different stages of age development. Analyzing social interest A. Adler, the follower of S. Freud, noted that social initiative combines individual and social phenomena. The scientist believes that social initiative is an innate property of the individual and includes social thoughts and social behavior. Exploring the personality of student age, N. A. Maslyuk noted that studying process in higher educational establishments is a prerequisite for the development of social thinking.

After all, the educational process helps to increase the efficiency of setting and solving life problems, the formation of the personality of the future professional. The scientist found out that social thinking at student age is interrelated with the development of the personal environment, a sense of responsibility, life satisfaction and the ability to self-identify. Social psychologist D. Myers defined social thinking as thoughts focused on the individual's knowledge of social reality, the relationship between people and social situations. Instead, the scientist defined social behavior as effective social activity, the interaction of people with each other. N. M. Rubtsova found out that the social behavior of students is formed and manifested in the context of socialization. The scientist believes that the causes of social behavior are personal values, social intelligence, communicative and organizational tendencies [3, 16, 17, 27].

According to the psychoanalyst and founder of the theory of stages of psychosocial development E. G. Erickson, initiative is a psychological characteristic of individual behavior that occurs during social interaction. The scientist considers social initiative through the perception of leadership qualities of the individual, which are expressed by the ability to manage social processes. Psychologists have discovered the rapid development of students' leadership qualities through their participation in community and student organizations. R. Harold identified the main manifestations of leadership qualities at student age: interpersonal interaction, the ability to plan and make decisions, effective problem solving, critical thinking and the ability to social activity. W. Shackleton, considering the psychology of leadership in business, defined leadership as a process

in which one person (leader) influences others to achieve a common goal. The scientist identified the main features of a leader: direct influence on the behavior of others, the presence of a group of people who obey and the goals for their implementation [8, 20, 29].

D. M. Uznadze, K. A. Abulkhanova-Slavska and L. V. Larson interpreted the term “social initiative” through the perception of the activity approach in psychological science. D. M. Uznadze, the psychologist, developer of the theory of attitudes believed that social initiative is inherent in individuals who seek to implement social attitudes. Social attitudes, according to D. M. Uznadze, are expressed in the dynamic state of a human and his readiness for social activity. The scientist investigated that the process of activity of the individual occurs only when he seeks to implement specific attitudes, to realize subconscious goals and desires. J. Godfrey believes that at the student age social attitudes reach the peak of their development and form a system of personal beliefs, which generates a worldview of the individual [9, 32].

K. A. Abulkhanova-Slavska defines initiative through the perception of the activity approach. According to her, initiative is a free human activity that precedes external requirements and is phenomenologically expressed in initiatives of the individual. The scientist interprets social initiative as a person’s need for personal integrity and significance, as well as his readiness for social interaction with other people [2]. Instead, the American psychologist L. V. Larson found it impossible to form social initiative without the process of communication. The scientist noted that a socially enterprising person is a good communicator [15]. Exploring the communicative abilities of students, K. A. Grybenko, identified the main signs of the existence of these abilities in the individual: the presence of communicative knowledge, motivation for communicative activities, features of character and behavior in communicative activities. The scientist believes that communication skills are expressed in the ability to establish positive social contacts with other people. According to scientists, the development of readiness for social interaction of students is associated with social adaptation, personal and emotional maturity, the ability to show initiative and the presence of communication skills [10].

Modern psychologists consider social initiative through the unity of systemic, personality-oriented and activity approaches in psychology. S. V. Tetersky, S. G. Lisnikova and O. V. Nenarokova define social initiative as readiness for independent social activity, focus on personal well-being, self-affirmation, self-attitude and desire to cooperate with other people. S. V. Tetersky found that social initiative is focused on the realization of their own, social and state goals. According to O. V. Nenarokova stimulus for the manifestation of social initiative is a person’s desire to cooperate with others, resulting in the solution of their own or social problems [21, 25, 31].

S. V. Chebrivska studied the formation of student’s independence. The scientist noted that the independence of students is manifested in their ability in various ways to acquire knowledge, skills and abilities necessary for their lives. American psychologist A. Bandura noted that independence is a feature of personality that aims at building independent behavior in the society. The founder of existential psychology R. May identified the concept of independence and freedom, the main criterion of which is the independence of the individual from any external and internal factors [4, 7, 18].

According to scientists, personal well-being at student age is an indicator of personality maturity and is formed from the unity with the self-consciousness of the individual. K. Riff, researching the psychological well-being of young people identified its main components: self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, control over their lives, the presence of life goals. Also, at student age, personal self-affirmation becomes important, which is manifested in the professional, social and family spheres. According to scientists, the effective development of students' self-affirmation requires the set of psychological factors: the focus of the educational process on increasing students' knowledge of the essence of human self-affirmation, knowledge of modern professional activities; actualization of self-knowledge; expanding students' ideas about themselves as a subject of activity; developing the students responsibility for their choice and for choosing their own strategy of self-affirmation. N. E. Kharlamenkova believes that self-affirmation is expressed in the desire of the individual to confirm their own value to other people. According to the scientist, the value attitude of other individuals should be correlated with self-esteem. L. S. Vygotsky defined self-attitude as an integral attitude of a human to himself, a measure of self-acceptance, which is manifested in the process of specific social situations. At student age, the formation of an integral self-awareness of the individual becomes important. Formation of student self-consciousness is under the influence of professional self-determination, interpersonal interaction and social activity. Important psychological factors that form the student's self-esteem are social attitudes, motivation, values and emotional states. Studying the formation of the personality of the student age, scientists have discovered the importance of social interaction in the process of life. The effectiveness of interpersonal communication of students depends on their ability to cooperate with other people. K. Thomas considers the ability to cooperate as the most productive communication strategy, which is expressed in the equality of status and psychological power over the communication process [12, 23, 28, 33].

S. L. Sidorkina and A. G. Shabanov identifies the concepts of social initiative, goal setting and social responsibility. A. G. Shabanov noted that social initiative is manifested in a person's ability to put forward and implement a meaningful socially useful idea in order to realize and lead to positive changes in the social situation [6, 30].

Student age is a time of planning and realization of life goals. A. V. Khutorsky pointed the dominant goals of students: objective, creative, cognitive and personal ones. The ability to realize their own goals is the basis of future professional activities of young people.

Personal and social responsibility, which is realized in the process of educational, professional and social interactions, becomes important in adolescence. D. Rotter reveals the main idea of the concept of responsibility through locus of control (internal and external). According to the scientist, responsibility is the ability of an individual to take responsibility for their own behavior and for the behavior of others in the process of activity [11, 24, 26].

N. G. Bryukhov and V. I. Rogacheva noted that the presence of the individuals' motivation to succeed promotes the development of social initiative. Scientists have found that the socially initiative personality of the student age has a high level of realization of their goals and motives. According to scientists, the development of student's motivation to succeed is manifested in the desire to solve problems and achieve the desired independence and in the realization

of their own potential. The founder of the theory of motivation H. Heckhausen considered the motivation to succeed through the idea of personal success, the level of complexity of the process of success, the importance for the individual success, the desire to support and increase self-esteem, adequacy in choosing and implementing success [5, 13].

The analysis of the scientists views allowed to determine the content of the phenomenon of “social initiative”. This phenomenon includes: social attitudes, social thinking (thoughts), self-determination, independence, responsibility, goal setting, self-affirmation, well-being, motivation to succeed, ability to cooperate with others, readiness for social activity, communicative behavior and leadership. Summarizing the properties of social initiative, the structural components of this phenomenon were identified: cognitive-evaluative, motivational-volitional and behavioral-communicative. The cognitive-evaluative component of social initiative combined social attitudes and opinions, self-attitude, independence and responsibility. This criterion is manifested in the experience and opinions of higher education students about the socially initiative personality and in their attitude to themselves, independence and responsibility in the process of social interaction. The motivational-volitional component includes goal-setting, self-affirmation, well-being and motivation to succeed. It is denominated in the presence of students’ impulses to socially active behavior and in the conscious management of their social activities. The behavioral-communicative component includes the following properties of social initiative: the ability to cooperate with other people, readiness for social activity, communicative abilities and leadership. This criterion is manifested in the willingness to show social initiative and the ability to communicate with other people.

An empirical study of this phenomenon of students was conducted on the basis of selected components, levels and indicators of social initiative. The sample of psychological research included 263 applicants aged 17 to 22 who study in different higher education establishments and for various majors. Respondents were a group of different sexual and individual psychological parameters. The choice of psychodiagnostic tools is aimed at the systematic study of the structural components of social initiative: cognitive-evaluative, motivational-volitional and behavioral-communicative.

Empirical research included a set of psychological techniques that provided a systemic study of the structure of social initiative: projective methodology G. E. Bilytska “Work” (modified by N. A. Khvorostyanko); methods of diagnosis of socio-psychological attitudes of the individual in the motivational-needs sphere developed by O. F. Potemkina; test questionnaire by S. R. Panteleeva and V. V. Stolina — “Self-assembly”; the method of “Diagnosis of personal maturity” developed by V. O. Ruzhenkov, V. V. Ruzhenkova, I. S. Lukyantseva (modified by N. A. Khvorostyanko); the psychological well-being scale which was developed by K. Riff; the method of research of features of self-affirmation by O. A. Kireeva and T. D. Dubovytska; T. Ehlers questionnaire “Motivation to succeed”; projective method “Orientation of the individual in communication” (S. L. Bratchenko); the test “Diagnosis of leadership skills” by E. I. Zharikova, E. L. Krushelnytsky; the method “Diagnosis of the study of socialization of the individual” developed by M. I. Rozhkov (modified by NA Khvorostyanko). The choice of methodological support was realized by the selection of adequate, valid, reliable, complementary psychological methods aimed at studying the social initiative of students.

Table 1. Components, Levels and Indicators of Social Students' Initiative in Higher Education Establishments

Social initiative components	Levels of realization of social initiative components		
	High	Average	Low
Cognitive-evaluative	Availability of social attitudes; high degree of development of social thinking; adequate self-perception and evaluation of their behavior; independence and responsibility during the process of social activity.	Social attitudes are focused on the result or process of social activity; average level of development of social thinking; inflated self-esteem; independent activity and responsibility for it depends on the level of interest to the situation.	Lack of social attitudes; social thinking is expressed in the unwillingness to influence and improve life situations; low level of self-esteem, incomplete perception of their behavior; low level of independence and responsibility, inherent avoidance of difficult life situations.
Motivational and volitional	The presence of goals in life, the desire to implement them and the ability to design them; constructive self-affirmation; social and personal well-being; high level of motivation to succeed.	The presence of goals in life, the desire to implement them and the ability to design them; constructive self-affirmation; social and personal well-being; high level of motivation to succeed.	Unwillingness and inability to realize one's own goals, destructive manifestation of self-affirmation, lack of desire for well-being and motivation to succeed.
Behavioral and communicative	High level of ability to cooperate with other people; readiness for social activity; communicative behavior, focus on the communication process and leadership qualities.	Ability to cooperate, social adaptability, social activity, communication orientation, communicative behavior, but in the presence of such a need for the subjects themselves; leadership qualities are not fully expressed.	Low level of ability to cooperate; unpreparedness for socially active and communicative behavior, not inherent in leadership qualities.

According to the results of the empirical study, the levels of development of the system of structural components of social initiative of freelance students were revealed (see Chart. 1).

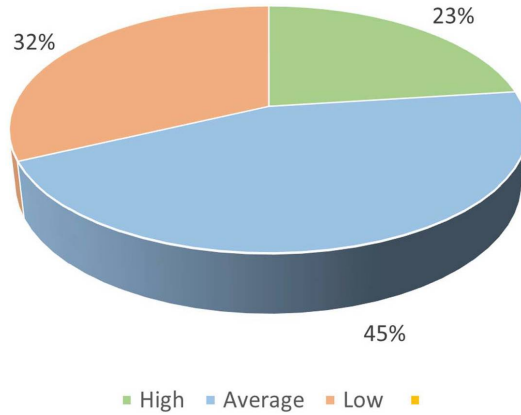


Chart. 1: Levels of Manifestation of the System of Structural Components of Students Social Initiative in Higher Educational Establishments (in %).

23% of students have a high level of social initiative which indicates their readiness for socially active activities. Cognitive-evaluative, motivational-volitional and behavioral-communicative components of social initiative have high levels in all indicators. Applicants for higher education have social attitudes that form their readiness for social activities. Researchers are focused on both the process and the result in social activities. Students' social thinking has a high degree of understanding, the desire to identify cause-and-effect relationships, sources of life situations and find constructive ways to solve them with predictable results. Applicants for higher education adequately perceive themselves, their psychological characteristics and their behavior during social interaction. Individuals with a high degree of manifestation of the cognitive-emotional component are characterized by independent social activity in different situations and the ability to take responsibility for it. The students with a high level of social initiative have goals in life, the desire to implement them and the ability to design them. Applicants for higher education are characterized by constructive self-affirmation, they are confident, have skills of self-organization, personally mature. Students' activities are aimed at social and personal well-being. The subjects have a high level of motivation to succeed. They have no fear of failure in social activities. Students have a high level of skills to cooperate with other people. They are characterized by active work on solving the problem, which combines the desire to best satisfy both their own interests and the interests of the other party. Applicants for higher education are always ready for active social position. They are characterized by communicative behavior, which is expressed in the ability to apply styles and tools during the communicative process. The students are directed on the communication process. During social interaction, students show their leadership qualities.

The average level of social initiative is 45% of the students, which indicates



their partial readiness for social activity. These applicants for higher education have an average level of cognitive-evaluative, motivational-volitional and behavioral-communicative components of the system of social initiative. Students are focused on the process or result in social activities. They are characterized by social thinking, the desire to identify cause-and-effect relationships, sources of specific life situations, but only in the sphere of life. Respondents have an inflated perception of themselves, their psychological characteristics and their behavior, which does not allow them to fully interact socially. Independent activity of individuals and responsibility for it depends on the level of their interest in the social situation. Researchers with a partial manifestation of social initiative have life goals, but the ability to implement them is inherent only in simple goals. They do not see the meaning of life in all life situations. Respondents are characterized by a refusal to assert themselves; they do not always have a plan for the future. They are characterized only by personal well-being, while social well-being is not important to them. The motivation to succeed is realized only through the personal needs they avoid failure. Students know how to cooperate with others, but it is difficult for them to stay in social interaction for a long time. They are socially adapted, ready for social activity. Leadership qualities are not fully expressed.

An empirical study found that 32% of students have a low level of social initiative, which indicates their unwillingness to get engaged in socially activities. Respondents have a low level of manifestation of the system of structural components of social initiative. This is manifested in the lack of students' social attitudes. Researchers are not focused on the process or result in social activities. The social thinking of higher education seekers is expressed in the unwillingness to influence and improve life situations, passive attitude towards others. Respondents with a low degree of social initiative have a low level of self-esteem, incomplete perception of their behavior. Researchers do not want to act independently in life situations and be responsible for it. They are characterized by the avoidance of difficult social situations. Students do not want and do not know how to achieve their own goals. They are a destructive manifestation of self-affirmation, lack of desire for well-being and motivation to succeed. Applicants for higher education do not have the motives and desires to implement social activity. These respondents have a low level of cooperation skills; they avoid the process of communication. Students are not ready for socially active and communicative behavior, because it is difficult for them to establish social contacts. They do not have leadership qualities, which is expressed in the unwillingness to take responsibility in social interaction.

Based on empirical research and taking into account certain components, levels and indicators of social initiative of students, a model of psychological formation of the system of social initiative of students was developed (see Chart. 2). This model indicates the components and criteria of socially initiative personality of student age, which allows you to clearly see the system of structural units of student's social initiative. The given model confirms the need to study social initiative through the perception of a systemic approach in psychology. After all, the formation of student's social initiative is expressed in the integrity, structure, multidimensionality, hierarchy and dynamism of all structural units of this phenomenon. Also, it is important to note that the

social initiative of the individual is the driving force of social activity at student age. It is important factor in the success of educational and out of class activities in modern higher education in Ukraine.

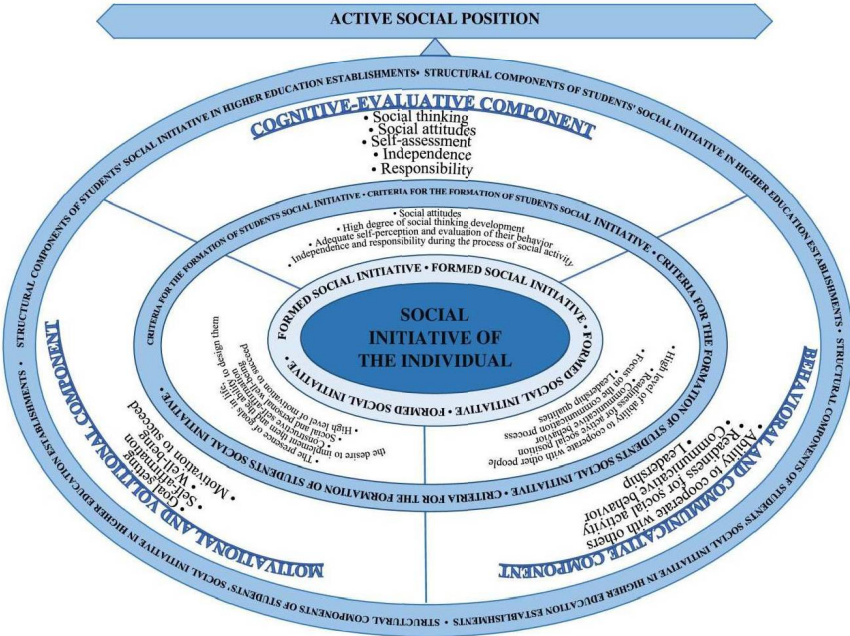


Chart. 2: The Model of Psychological Formation of the System of Student’s Social Initiative in Higher Educational Establishments.

Thus, social initiative is a systemic quality of personality, which is manifested in the presence of social cognitions, adequate self-esteem and motivation to implement leadership and communicative qualities, during independent and responsible socially activities aimed at achieving social and personal well-being and personal goals.

The study of social initiative at student age is of paramount importance for the implementation of student-centered approach in higher education of Ukraine. After all, the social initiative of students is one of the main social qualities that contribute to the successful implementation of educational and extracurricular processes in higher education establishments. Also, the presence of students’ social initiative helps their professional development. The system of social initiative of higher education seekers includes such components: cognitive"-evaluation, motivational-volitional and behavioral-communicative; such levels as: high, medium and low and indicators. The conducted empirical research revealed the levels of formation of each of the components of student’s social initiative. Only 32% of the respondents formed a system of structural components of social initiative. This demonstrates the importance of studying this phenomenon for its future effective development at student age. The study of student’s social initiative will allow correctly choosing the forms and methods of teaching in free economic education and providing practicing psychologists with psychodiagnostic material to identify the level of student’s

social initiative. The created model of psychological formation of the system of student's social initiative gives an integral view of the psychological content of this phenomenon.

The prospect of further research is the development and implementation of psychological tools for the development of students social initiatives, taking into account the dynamic of this phenomenon and age trends.

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